The newest light in the dramatically transforming UMass Lowell campus—the Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center (ETIC)—officially opened on Oct. 11 under bright autumn sunlight that caused the building to literally shine.

Over 500 UMass Lowell community members, public officials and industry leaders officially opened the ETIC, an 84,000-square-foot, $80 million research center and the first new academic building constructed on campus in more than three decades.

The cutting-edge facility will be home to advanced research in nanotechnology, molecular biology, plastics engineering and optics that will advance fields such as life sciences, energy, national security, environmental protection and more.

Speakers at the opening sounded common themes:

- ETIC will provide hands-on learning and research experience that will help students get good jobs when they graduate;
- The innovation that emerges will boost the regional and state economies and lead to the creation of jobs and
government-sponsored research and foster industry partnerships in the global marketplace. The center’s multi-disciplined capabilities are integrated under one roof and supported by skilled technicians.

The project was funded through $35 million from the Massachusetts Economic Investment Act of 2006, $5 million from the federal government, bonding through the UMass Building Authority, a $10 million grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, and industry and individual donors, including UMass Lowell alumni.

Governor Deval Patrick told those gathered, “Our strategy for economic development in Massachusetts rests on education, innovation and infrastructure. This building strikes all three prongs.”

Meehan thanked former Chancellor William T. Hogan, who had originally conceived of plans for the facility, and former State Sen. Steven Panagiotakos, who helped secure state funding to get the project underway.
In its recently released Best Colleges 2013, U.S. News & World Report ranks UMass Lowell at No. 170—up seven places over last year—on its Best National Universities list. Among public universities nationwide, UMass Lowell is ranked within the top 100.

This is the third year UMass Lowell has been named a top-tier national university, climbing in rank each year. U.S. News & World Report also named UMass Lowell as a best bet for college-bound students who possess a strong work ethic, are engaged in their communities and who have maintained a solid “B” academic average in high school. This is the first year the UMass Lowell has made this list.

These rankings underscore the University’s gains in enrollment, the academic strengths of its students and its retention rate over the last five years. For the first time in the University’s history, UMass Lowell’s enrollment is more than 16,000 students—up nearly 1,000 students from the same time last year—with increases in new students as well as those continuing their education.

Enrollment at the University has grown 46 percent in the last five years.

This year’s freshmen, 83 percent of whom live on campus, have an average SAT score of 1,127, an increase of 57 points over six years.

Learning with Purpose
Experts Receive $1.9M NSF Grant for Wind-Energy Research

Innovative Turbine Blade Material Will Be Derived From Vegetable Oil

The United States will see the number of commercial wind-turbine units grow to 170,000 by 2030, supplying up to 20 percent of the country’s energy demand.

However, this growth means the disposal of well over 34,000 turbine blades per year in the United States and approximately five times as many globally. These blades can measure up to 200 feet long and weigh as much as 18 tons each.

“These blades are manufactured from fiberglass composites containing large amounts of petroleum-based epoxy resins and at the end of their lives they are very difficult to recycle,” says mechanical engineering Prof. Christopher Niezrecki.

“This study aims to replace petroleum-based epoxy resins currently used in turbine blades with more eco-friendly materials,” says Niezrecki, who is the principal investigator for the project and a member of UMass Lowell’s Wind Energy Research Group.

“We will also assess and understand the impact this blade conversion will have on the economy, wind industry, environment and society,” he adds.

Ambassadors Welcome Students From Across the Globe

New Program Supports Growing International Population

This fall, UMass Lowell welcomed its largest international enrollment, with students hailing from 50 countries in between.

To ease the transition for students arriving from other countries, the International Students and Scholars Office has recruited a team of student ambassadors whose duties include everything from helping new students navigate their way around campus to planning social activities and programs.

The student ambassador program was launched last year, with more than a dozen students from around the world participating. In addition to helping with orientation, the ambassadors organize social and cultural activities like the weekly coffee hour held on North Campus and plan excursions to popular shopping or sightseeing destinations.

Siddarth Sharma, an MBA student in the Manning School of Business, joined the international ambassador program last year because he wanted help others feel at home on campus.

“I want to be a touch point for international students. Whether it’s figuring out email addresses, student identification cards or housing, it’s very complicated for international students and we don’t have family here to help,” says Sharma, who is a native of India.

The Friday afternoon coffee-hour program has been popular among international students who gather to socialize and learn about what’s happening on campus. Each week features a different theme, with food or activities from different countries. Staff members from various campus departments and offices are invited to update students on topics like transportation or career services.

MBA student Siddarth Sharma is helping fellow international students settle into campus as part of the international student ambassador program.

Professor Researches Marketing-Stock Market Link

Project Examines Whether Stock Activity Can Predict the Future

If auto industry executives had a tool that could predict the success of future products, would there be more bestselling cars like the Camry and fewer flops like the Edsel?

Manning School of Business Asst. Prof. Berk Talay is researching the possible existence of such a tool, thanks to a recent Joseph P. Healey Advancing Research, Scholarship and Creative Work Seed Grant.

“We want to give managers and the entire public an easy and yet valuable tool to predict the future,” he says. “That tool is the stock market.”

Talay is researching the relationship between public companies’ marketing activities and subsequent stock market reaction to see whether investors’ response is a reliable indicator of the product’s success. If a connection is established, businesses could use the insight gleaned from the stock market reaction to shape their marketing plans, he says.

If, for instance, a carmaker’s stock price dips after announcing plans for a new model, then company executives could make adjustments to their marketing strategy. The company could reconsider the car’s launch date or make other changes to improve its chances for success, Talay says.

For consumers, such insight could lead to more informed decision-making when it comes to one of the biggest purchases they’ll ever make, Talay says.
Debate Draws Worldwide Attention

Brown, Warren Face Off at UMass Lowell

When Scott Brown and Elizabeth Warren faced off at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell on Oct. 1, more than 5,000 people and more than 100 media outlets were in attendance. Hundreds sang, chanted and waved signs for one candidate or the other outside for hours leading up to the debate. Why? More than one seat is at stake as the outcome will likely determine which party controls the Senate. The tight race—with polls seeing on who is ahead—is being closely watched around the country.

The debate was sponsored by UMass Lowell and the Boston Herald. UMass Lowell was widely praised for doing an outstanding job hosting the event, moderated by David Gregory of NBC’s “Meet the Press.” From crowd control, to sound and lighting and security to managing and supporting scores of reporters from print, broadcast and Internet outlets, the event went off without a hitch.

The University ensured that students from UMass Lowell as well as from other colleges and from high schools around the state were front and center. UMass Lowell students were on stage during the debate and had a chance to question the candidates on air.

The debate was aired live by C-Span, covered by all five Boston TV stations, as well as stations from New Hampshire and Springfield. Over 700 media hits have been tracked including the New York Times, The Nation, the Huffington Post, Bloomberg News and Esquire. Countless tweets, retweets and Facebook postings were made during and after the event.

Over 500,000 people viewed the debate either online or on Channel 7, reported by the Herald.

The live-stream of the debate was viewed nationwide and in Canada, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, Brazil, Italy, France, South Africa and the Russian Federation, among other places.

The debate was presented through UMass Lowell’s Center for Public Opinion, which sponsors events and independent, non-partisan public opinion polls on political and social issues. Through its work, the center provides UMass Lowell students and faculty with a variety of unique, real-world academic and research opportunities. UMass Lowell’s division of Online and Continuing Education helped sponsor the debate.

Scores of media outlets and over 5,000 people turned out to watch the debate between U.S. Sen. Scott Brown (R) and Elizabeth Warren (D) at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell. Enthusiastic supporters of both Brown and Warren thronged outside the Tsongas Center before and during the debate.

David Gregory, left, of NBC’s “Meet the Press” moderates the debate between U.S. Sen. Scott Brown (R) and Elizabeth Warren (D) at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell on Oct. 1.